

American Accent

United States Embassy

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<http://honduras.usembassy.gov>

Consular Mission

We want to hear from you! American citizen services would like all U.S. citizens living in Honduras to register with the Consulate. We hope this newsletter helps better keep you in touch with us and the community. Whether you are involved with a NGO, mission group, or if you are a family or individual here on vacation, the Embassy can be part of your support system. If you know of other Americans living in Honduras, please forward this newsletter to them and encourage them to provide us their email addresses and to register with the Embassy.



From left: Consul General Ian Brownlee, Deputy Consul General Victoria Coffineau, ACS Chief Russell Brooks

The twofold mission of the Consulate is to provide services and useful information for American citizens planning to travel, reside or invest in Honduras, and to provide visa services to Honduran citizens and other foreign nationals, both for temporary visits to the U.S. and for permanent immigration.

The Consular Section is located on the ground floor of the U.S. Embassy on Avenida La Paz in Tegucigalpa. We are open to the public Monday through Friday (except on U.S. and Honduran holidays) from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. For after hours emergencies (but not visa information), please call (504) 236-9325 and the Marines will locate a duty officer who will be able to assist you. Please feel free to contact us!

-Contributed by the Consular Section

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Virtual Consulate opens to serve San Pedro Sula

"The mission of the Virtual Consulate San Pedro Sula is to facilitate communication and understanding between U.S. and Honduras business interests while providing helpful information for American residents and Honduran travelers."

Twenty years ago if the United States had considered expanding their diplomatic presence into San Pedro Sula the process would have been expensive, lengthy, and unwieldy. There would have been construction sites to investigate, security to appraise, new personnel to hire, and offices to stock. In the reality of post September 11th the process has only become more difficult. In the 21st century the world has

changed how it does business. While in the past it made sense to conduct most of our relations through a centrally located Embassy, this is increasingly no longer the case. Improved transportation links and modern communication technologies have made cities and individuals more accessible. They, and we, can now engage and interact directly, and over the Internet, to a degree that was not possible a few years ago. More than ever we need to adjust our diplomatic business practices if we are to keep pace.

The city of San Pedro Sula and the north coast poses significant opportunities to increase trade, economic well-being and cultural exchanges between the United States and Honduras. The Virtual Consulate of San Pedro Sula seeks to identify these opportunities,



<http://sanpedrosula.usvpp.gov/>

Virtual Consulate, continued

coordinate the many and growing activities of U.S. departments in the area, and extend the Embassy's reach to an important Honduran city where previously our contacts were limited. Our virtual post strives to achieve much of the effect of an actual physical diplomatic mission, but without the building or permanent staff. This 21st Century diplomatic engagement strategy uses the traditional diplomacy of assistance programs and site visits with the new diplomacy of branded Websites, e-mail, and (coming soon) digital video conferencing and chat sessions. All is managed by a dedicated City Team selected to represent the many Embassy offices that have an interest in the San Pedro Sula area.

As San Pedro Sula grows in size and importance our Virtual Consulate is committed to keeping the United States engaged in the "Corazon de CAFTA."

Now a message from the Principal Officer of the Virtual Consulate, Martin P. Healy:

Our mission is to develop relation-

ships, facilitate partnerships, and implement programs that meet the needs of the many groups that represent or have an interest in San Pedro Sula. Groups like your own.

We have worked hard to set up this website as the resource for San Pedro Sula, but we have a long way to go. To truly serve as a resource we need your participation and assistance. For example, if you are a Honduran business looking to start a U.S. franchise in San Pedro Sula, or a student who would like an Embassy representative to speak to your group, or even a community group looking to link up with a counterpart in the U.S., let us know. Similarly, if you are a U.S. company seeking a business partner or a group thinking of donating time or materials to a humanitarian cause, send me an email at VCSPS@state.gov. We are looking to creating opportunities, and your input is vital.

The next few years hold enormous promise for Honduras, and San Pedro Sula is key to this future. With your help we will make it a success.

-Contributed by the Economic Section

Federal Benefits Unit at your service

The Federal Benefits Unit of the Consulate is here to help U.S. citizens with their federal benefits while outside the U.S. Our main objective is to review and assure that the federal benefits laws are applied with effectiveness and efficiency to the public, and safeguard against fraud and malfeasance. We deal with federal agencies like the Veterans' Affairs Administration, Social Security Administration, Railroad Retirement Board and Office of Personnel Management, and with their representatives.

We help U.S. citizens facilitate benefits payments, verify changes in vital statistics documents, interview or investigate claimants and provide a specific explanation on the decisions made by each agency. We also help explain the steps that may need

to be followed according to that agency's decision.

Specifically, we can make toll free phone calls for you, take applications for benefits (but not process them), conduct interviews, conduct investigations, and send people for medical examinations (only when required by the Office of International Operations).

For Social Security, a commonly used service, if a person has lost their social security card, needs to change their name or applies for the first time, we take the applications with the appropriate documentation and then send them to the Social Security Administration in Baltimore.

If you have any questions, please contact the Federal Benefits Unit at FBUACC@state.gov.

-Contributed by the Consular Section



**Straight
from the
Source-**
Ambassador
Charles Ford

As Ambassador for the United States of America in Honduras, I welcome you to the first edition of *American Accent*, the newsletter that aims to keep you connected to the Embassy and the U.S. community in Honduras. Though we at the Embassy are based in Tegucigalpa, we want to be connected to American citizens living all over the country. I hope this newsletter provides you not only with helpful information regarding Consular services and Embassy registration, but that it also better acquaints you with the U.S. agencies in Honduras, including USAID, Peace Corps, and the military presence at Soto Cano Airbase.

First and foremost, our priority as the Embassy, and my priority as Ambassador, is to protect U.S. citizens and to provide them with necessary services while they are living in or visiting Honduras. I am also working with Honduran government officials and businessmen to facilitate U.S. foreign direct investment to promote bilateral trade and economic development in Honduras. Finalizing the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) in order to promote an open market economy and free trade is also a top priority. We hope to see a steadfast and transparent democracy emerge that promotes the rule of law and human rights in Honduras, to create a higher level of security for Hondurans and U.S. citizens alike. Enforcing immigration laws and working against narcotics and alien trafficking groups to protect U.S. national security interests is also a priority.

Again, welcome, and we hope this newsletter connects you to the Embassy and community.

USAID adds to the U.S. presence in Honduras

The U.S. Agency for International Development has been active in Honduras for over 40 years, promoting the economic development of this country. During the Hurricane Mitch reconstruction period, personnel working for USAID administered some \$300M in funds to rebuild infrastructure damaged by the deadly hurricane in 1998. In the current 5 year period, USAID is working in the three strategic areas of (1) economic growth (2) investing in people's health and education and (3) good governance.

To accomplish its work, USAID partners with some Honduran organizations and individuals, but also has teamed up with various U.S. firms, universities, organizations and individuals.

Some twenty five American Professionals are present in Honduras in conjunction with USAID's programs. These are accompanied by approximately 28 family members.

The expertise of these American professionals is as varied as USAID's activities. Here are some examples of the specialties they bring:

- Strengthening rule of law
- Strengthening governance at the Municipal level
- Protection of Honduras' bio diversity and watersheds
- Diversifying Honduran agricultural production, to gen-

erate greater export earnings

- Improving Primary school education.
- Preventing infectious diseases and reducing child mortality

USAID Contractors and Grantees maintain close contact with their project managers at USAID. USAID encourages U.S. personnel under their Contracts to register at Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy, because:

- The Embassy may be able to help them better if they need assistance, e.g. if they lose a passport.
- The Consular Section would add them to the Americans Warden Network.
- In case of emergency, the U.S. Citizen's preference about release of information under the Privacy Act would be recorded.

USAID's Contractors and Grantees are often the front line of U.S. Economic Assistance in Honduras. As such, they embody the Agency's logo - "USAID - From the American People".

-Contributed by USAID



USAID program helps small handicraft producers take advantage of large international market

When one thinks of Honduran exports, coffee and bananas usually come to mind; however, local handicrafts that directly reflect the Honduran culture are one of the most unique export products the country has to offer. Hondurans have been making these handicrafts, made of natural materials such as wood or clay, for many generations, with parents passing down the art to their children. Over the years, dedicated artisans throughout the country have sold their beautiful handicrafts locally, usually to tourists by the side of the road, with little profit. They have remained unaware of the high demand on the international market for their products and do not possess the knowledge nor skills to take advantage of this huge commercial opportunity. Nevertheless, with access to the global marketplace, proper training in product design and production, and economic assistance, artisans throughout Honduras could improve their standard of living by taking advantage of the benefits of selling their handicrafts internationally.



The women of La Rinconada are now making more profit on their handicrafts by selling them on the international market.

A USAID Global Development Alliance Initiative Program is giving artisans in Honduras the assistance needed in order to take full advantage of the international market. This \$2.1 million program seeks to enhance the quality of life of 800 small and medium handicraft manufacturers through technical and economic assistance. Technical assistance is provided to strengthen the design and commercialization process. Permanent feedback between the international market and producers is provided through professional consultants that study market trends for handicrafts. Training is then provided to the producers according to the changing designs and materials that the global market mandates. In addition, USAID provides these producers with economic assistance to finance proper infrastructure, such as brick ovens to make clay products and workshops to provide a more efficient work environment.

Hunter Ogletree-USAID/Honduras

USAID success story, continued

La Rinconada, a community of 12 families in the southern department of Valle, is a beneficiary of the program. In this dusty rural village, the women have been producing beautifully designed clay products for decades. It was not until 2004, however, that USAID helped them

“Since the beginning of the project, the women of La Rinconada have increased their monthly income by 150%.”

open up their products to the international market, changing completely the way they did business. Before the program began in La Rinconada, the women of the community produced only two product designs, a simple clay water jug and pot, and sold them for little money.

The women also produced their handicrafts without proper infrastructure, by working out of their homes and using their cooking ovens to manufacture their products.

With USAID's economic and technical support, encouraging results have been achieved in La Rinconada. The women of La Rinconada have increased their product line from two items to over a dozen. Most importantly, these women are producing their handicrafts more efficiently and earning significantly more, thereby achieving a higher standard of living. One woman in the community, while working in the shadow of her newly built adobe house, said this of the results of the program, “We sell more products and sell them better. Before, the products were really cheap, now the price is increasing and we sell a larger quantity. It helps us a lot. Before, we did not have a house because the product was not worth anything.” Since the beginning of the project, the women of La Rinconada have increased their monthly incomes by 150%. Results such as those in La Rinconada have been achieved in other communities throughout the country since the program began in 2004, and USAID hopes to build on this success during the next two years of the program.

-Contributed by USAID

From cover crops to biogas, Peace Corps volunteer makes a difference in Honduras

San Marcos, Guaimaca, F. M. Honduras

Rural Honduras has seen itself imbedded in a tragic crisis that continues to worsen as forests are cut, land is bled of nutrients, and malnutrition runs rampant. San Marcos, Guaimaca in the department of Francisco Morazán, is no exception to this crisis as its lands grow more infertile, and the surrounding biological reserve el Chile falls victim to the chainsaw and hatchet. Most farmers and individuals in zones like San Marcos are fairly aware of this crisis; however, they have little working knowledge on how to make improvements.

In December 2002, with the help and coordination of Peace Corps Volunteer, Justin Trezza, a group of progressive farmers (Grupo Abonos Verdes) from San Marcos decided to meet and find a solution to the issue of declining soil fertility. The group of farmers began incorporating the leguminous green manure *Mucuna Pruriens* (velvet bean) with their corn and beans. The main attraction for the farmers to this climbing legume was its nitrogen-fixing property. Instead

of relying on common chemical fertilizers like Urea or 12-24-12, the farmers could now depend on mucuna for replacing the nutrient deprived soil with approximately 350 lbs of nitrogen per hectare. In addition to its nitrogen-fixing property, mucuna also serves as a cover crop – reducing invasive weeds and retaining soil moisture, and lastly as animal feed derived from its seeds.



Volunteer Justin Trezza with work counterpart Juan Antonio and the first biodigester.

After studying mucuna's nutritional value in pig feed the volunteer and group decided to put together a proposal for the purchase of swine and construction of pigpens. With help from Heifer International and a Peace Corps Small Project Assistance (SPA) grant, Grupo Abonos Verdes was able to purchase 16 sows and two boars of three separate breeds: Yorkshire, Landrace, and Duroc. To compliment the protein found in mucuna, the group members began incorporating into their swine's diet such locally produced fruits and grains as bananas, yucca, and malanga.

Within six months of the swine being purchased, the Peace Corps Volunteer and his counterpart began acknowledging the potential hazards of the large amounts of waste being produced by the animals. Realizing the harm caused

Peace Corps success story, continued



One of several piglets resulting from the original swine project

by pig manure and the recurring question of firewood and deforestation, the volunteer decided to investigate biogas and its beneficial uses. After several months of research and meetings the volunteer and community

were able to put together a second SPA proposal for the construction of biodigestors.

The biodigestors would serve the purpose of augmenting the anaerobic fermentation process (decomposition with the absence of oxygen), resulting in the production of methane gas. Waste produced by the pigs would be channeled to a large sausage-like container (the biodigestor) where they would mix with water. Once inside the biodigestor and with the help of methanogenic bacteria, the pig manure would slowly breakdown and release methane. The methane gas in turn would be connected by tubing to locally constructed burners that would produce

clean burning flames.

The production of biogas was the final stage in closing a cycle whose aim was to improve soil fertility, reduce malnutrition, and deforestation.

Today, 18 families in San Marcos are able to harvest corn from land fertilized by mucuna, enjoy porkchops, and cook their rice and beans on ozone friendly biogas stoves. In addition to these improvements, the biogas has fostered several other life improving factors including the reduction of harmful carbon dioxide gases produced by the burning of wood, pathogens derived from pig manure, and lastly the usage of the effluent flowing from the biodigestors as bio-fertilizer.

-Contributed by: Peace Corps



Installation of bucket for the entrance of the biodigestor

Youth Development Project sponsors the First National Baseball Competition for Peace Corps 45th anniversary.

The youth development Project feels happy with the results from the organization of the First National Competition of Baseball.

It was really a challenge to organize and get funds for an activity like this but there were many organizations that helped us, such as:

- a. the Air Force from Honduras (gave us free lodging for 50 kids)
- b. Gerizim Church (a bus to transport kids within the city)
- c. El Herald newspaper (articles about the competition)
- d. The Firemen in Honduras (an ambulance and paramedics for the three stadiums)
- e. The Marriott hotel (one lunch for 90 children)
- f. 12 ladies from Peace Corps gave us a dinner for the 170 children
- g. the RSO from the Embassy and the country Director helped with 20 percent of the trophies' price.

Also we had a great committee that helped us with this event, and there were representatives from:

- a. Major league: Manual Barahona and Carlos Garcia
- b. Children's league: Adalid Romero, Maria Elena and Rigiberto Mejia.
- c. Representing Peace Corps: Ronaldo Gomez and Sandra Gomez.

Nine teams participated (12 children per team), 2 Honduran coaches and 1 or 2 Peace Corps Volunteer Coaches. The teams were from: Minas de Oro and La liber-

tad – Comayagua, San Marcos de Ocotepeque, Guatemala and Orica, Morolica and Orocuina – Choluteca, Las Vegas and El Mochito Santa Barbara, Yorito – Yoro and Gualaco – Olancho.

The results were: Champion: Orocuina, 2nd Place : Morolica , third and four places: Minas de Oro and La Libertad.

-Contributed by Peace Corps



The teams went to the airspace museum to see the airplanes and find out about their history.

U.S. Military provides healthcare to underserved Hondurans

Since the early 1980s, the United States Military has been involved with humanitarian civic action-type training activities termed Medical Readiness Training Exercise (MEDRETE) in the Republic of Honduras. In fiscal year 2006, the United States Southern Command, in Miami, Florida will sponsor over forty Medical Readiness for Training Exercises (MEDERETES) in thirteen Western Hemisphere countries. Honduras is the recipient of 17 of the 40 MEDRETES.

As part of the Theater Security Cooperation Plan, MEDRETEs are short-term exercises designed to provide health care and preventive medicine education to under-



served civilian populations overseas. In many cases, this will be the only professional medical care they will receive. The average MEDRETE deployment from the continental United States is for a 14-17 day period to accomplish their mission. During fiscal year 2005, Honduras re-

ceived 13 MEDRETEs including: eye surgery, hand surgery, urology, ears, nose and throat, pediatrics, dental, and general MEDRETEs.

The United States Military Group in Tegucigalpa along with the Medical Detachment from Joint Task Force-Bravo in Soto Cano, have been coordinating and executing these high profile missions with notable success. Working closely with the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Defense, MEDRETEs missions provide a superb training opportunity for both civilian and military health professionals, serve as an ideal forum to build professional relationships, and are a powerful tool that benefits both participants and recipients.

From an engagement perspective, the value of the ME-

DRETE program cannot be overstated. It is not unheard of for a nation's President to individually request MEDRETEs or Humanitarian Civic-Action (HCA) projects directly from the U.S. Ambassador or the Commander of the United States Southern Command. In so doing, the national government is recognizing the great value of the program to their economic and social sectors (a project requirement by DoD directive).

A recent MEDRETE conducted in Honduras by medical specialists in optometry from Brooke Army Medical Center and Madigan Army Medical Center, treated over 1,000 patients during a 17-day period. Taking place in Choluteca and La Ceiba, the medical treatment was a local event that impacted the host nation at the community level by providing competent eye surgery to a rural, underserved population. The community impact, albeit a low-level engagement, is critically important as it fosters understanding between the participating civilian and military, and displays U.S. efforts in a positive light. As part of this MEDRETE, U.S. and Honduran optometrists were able to successfully restore vision in an innumerable amount of Honduran patients.



While the primary objective of a MEDRETE mission is to provide a training base for United States military medical professionals to improve their readiness posture, the benefits to the host nation are tremendous. Not only does it restore hope through medical care, but forges relationships, increases medical interoperability, and provides invaluable training opportunities.

-Contributed by: the U.S. Military Group

JOBS WANTED

Lucia Argüello

- Hard-working, creative and with great communication skills college student seeks experience while working.
- Multilingual: Fluent in Spanish and English, speaks Italian and French well.
- Proficient in Mac iWork and iLife programs, and extensive skills in photography and photodevelopment.
- Loyola University, New Orleans, LA student. Degree in Communications (public relations and photojournalism) expected in 2009.
- Contact info: larguellolacayo@yahoo.com
Cel: (504) 991-2312.

Luis Felipe Argüello

- College student with good communication skills seeks experience while working.
- Bilingual in English and Spanish.
- Proficient in Microsoft Office, Excel and Powerpoint.
- Competent in Internet research, written and oral communication, proofreading and editing documents.
- Degree from Johnson and Wales University, Providence, RI in Business Entrepreneurship expected in 2009.
- Contact info: luisfelipearguello@hotmail.com
Cel: (504) 991-7743.

Ambassador reaches out to North Coast and Bay Islands

Before new U.S. Ambassadors leave for post, the President gives them each a letter laying out their responsibilities, and the protection of U.S. citizens abroad is at the top of the list. Ambassador Ford has shown his commitment to fulfilling this mandate from President Bush by meeting with hundreds of private Americans, as well as pressing Honduran officials at all levels of government to protect Americans' rights here.

A large group of Americans met with Ambassador Ford and Consul General Ian Brownlee at Roatan's Coral Cay Resort on February 27. Town hall meetings give the Ambassador valuable insights into the community's concerns, including crime, infrastructure, environmental matters, and, of course, visas. He can, and does, then raise these issues with Honduran officials. We saw a big change in the community's concerns since the last town hall, in August 2005, when home invasions were the main issue. The arrest of members of the Los Fuertes gang in December with the help of a special



BayIslandsVoice.com



Honduran law enforcement team that works with the Embassy has helped reduce tensions on the Island.

Ambassador Ford and American Citizens Services Chief Russell Brooks met with U.S. citizens in San Pedro on March 21st. This was the Ambassador's second town hall meeting in San Pedro since arriving in Honduras in November. At the Escuela Internacional, over fifty people took part and raised a variety of issues. The apparent increase in crime and violence was a major concern, and Bruce Lizzi, the post Regional Security Officer, was present to offer practical advice on how to improve your level of personal security. There was also interest in the potential impact of CAFTA, the role of the virtual consulate, the services provided by the ACS staff, as well as questions concerning the non-immigrant and immigrant visa process. In addition, a separate meeting involving American-owned businesses focused on their particular security issues. The following day, the Ambassador's schedule was filled with events focused on labor rights, theft of intellectual property, and anti-gang initiatives.

-Contributed by: the Consular Section

SECURITY UPDATE

Over the past few months, the Regional Security Office has seen a slow but steady increase in the reported cases of armed robberies, muggings, murders, and other violent crimes throughout Honduras. These events occur during the daytime and nighttime hours, and they occur in all areas, regardless of the income level of the neighborhoods. Over the past several weeks RSO has received an increasing number of reports of violent criminal activity in Tegucigalpa. Although crime has historically been high in Honduras, recent trends seem to indicate that violent crime is on the rise not only in Tegucigalpa, but also in San Pedro Sula and the north coast cities.

-Contributed by the RSO office

FYI UPDATE

Delta Airlines now offers flights in and out of the San Pedro Sula airport. At this time, the airline has one plane leave and one enter per day, but they may adjust flight schedules according to seasonal needs. The flights go to and from Atlanta, Georgia and leave from San Pedro Sula at 8:30 am. daily, with flights to Roatan on Saturdays only. As of now, Delta does not fly into Tegucigalpa. This shows that American businesses now recognize the investment potential of Honduras.

-Contributed by the Economic Section

HEALTH UPDATE

ROTAVIRUS ALERT: The embassy health unit would like to inform you that Rotavirus is on the rise in Honduras. It affects mostly children, but adults may get it as well. Typical symptoms include acute diarrhea which may or may not be accompanied by vomiting, dehydration, dry skin and oral surfaces. Please don't wait if you or your family has any of these symptoms. Contact a doctor immediately, as you may need to go to the hospital.

AVIAN FLU ALERT: To date the Western Hemisphere is not an area affected by the bird flu, and U.S. government has taken precautions to prevent its spread. However, the virus has spread to other bird species other than poultry and has the potential to spread worldwide because of the migratory habits of birds. There is currently no vaccine that has been approved to provide protection against the bird flu, but Tamiflu may be an effective treatment, although not recommended for prevention. Unless in an area affected by bird flu (Asia), the usual precautions in flu prevention should be taken. If you find yourself in an area affected by bird flu, avoid all contact with chickens, ducks, or other poultry and their waste. If you come into contact with poultry in an affected area, wash your hands immediately, remove shoes outside the house and clean them well, and call your health provider if your temperature rises above 99.5F.

-Contributed by the Health Unit

April 2006



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2 Mario Urrutia photo exposition (until 7th)	3	4 Opening of nutrition center project Brazos Abiertos	5 Soil treatment seminar (5th & 6th).	6 Cuban film presentation: "Hacerse el Sueco"	7 Last night of photo exposition (began 31st)	8 Environmentalist meeting.
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20 Ruth Paz: Bingo night	21	22
23/30 (30th) Ruth Paz: Expo-Car	24	25	26	27	28 Ruth Paz: Expo-Car; National Fishing Tournament	29 Ruth Paz: Expo-Car; National Fishing Tournament

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- **April 4**– Presentación de Proyecto Centro de nutrición Brazos Abiertos (Opening of nutrition center project Brazos Abiertos), with a lecture from Monseñor Rómulo Emiliani; **Place**– Marriot Hotel, Tegucigalpa; **Time**– 5:00 pm.; **Cost**- Lps 100.
- **April 6**– Cuban Film presentation: "Hacerse el Sueco"; **Place**- Sabor Cubano: Colonia Palmira, 1/2 block below the red building, in front of restaurant Rojo, Verde y Ajo, Tegucigalpa; **Time**– 8:30 pm.
- **April 5-6**– Seminario de Manejo apropiado de suelos ácidos tropicales (Seminar on treatment of damaged soil); **Place**– FHIA, la Lima, Cortés; **Time**: 8:00 am– 4:00 pm. **Cost**- Lps.1,100.00 per person.
- **April 8**- Reunión Ambientalista Red Nacional de Comunidades afectadas y amenazadas por la Minería (Environmentalist meeting on communities affected by mining); **Place**: Escuela Fraile Juan de Jesús Cepeda, Comayagua; **Time**– 9:00 am; Confirm your participation by calling Sandra: cel. 380-2899, or email at caminando27@yahoo.es
- **Mar 31-Apr 7**– Photo exposition by Mario Urrutia: Honduras, Pasión y Religión; **Place**: Galería Marianita, IHCI, Blvd. Suyapa Tegucigalpa; **Time**: 9:00 a.m.
- **April 20-30**- Activities benefiting the Ruth Paz Foundation to help children with medical problems, such as: severe burns, orthopedics, hydrocephalus, heart problems, and cleft palate. **Bingo**: Club Arabe, San Pedro Sula, 7:00 p.m.; **Torneo Nacional de Pesca**: Restaurante Anclas en Cieneguita, Puerto Cortes; **Expo-Car / Casa Cassis King Racer**: Expocenter San Pedro Sula.
- **NOTICE: The Embassy will be undergoing renovation on its computer systems in late May and early June, and will therefore only be able to attend to emergency cases for U.S. citizens. If you have a passport that needs to be renewed, please do so by May 19, or we may not be able to help you.**



ATTENTION U.S. CITIZENS: VOTE!



All American citizens are reminded that 2006 is an election year in the United States. Overseas citizens are eligible to participate in primary, run-off, and special elections that occur throughout the year, as well as the general elections in November. A calendar of election dates is available on the Internet at <http://www.fvap.gov/pubs/primarycal.html>. You are encouraged to register to vote and/or request absentee ballots as early in the year as possible to ensure that you will receive all ballots for which you are eligible.

The following is the basic absentee voting process:

- You complete an application form (see below) and send it to local election officials in the U.S.
- The local official approves your request, or contacts you for further information
- The local official sends you an absentee ballot
- You vote the ballot and send it back in time to meet your state's deadline

If the ballot receipt deadline is drawing near, and you have not yet received the blank ballot from local officials, you can download an emergency ballot, write in the names of the candidates and the offices for which they are running, and send it back in time to meet your state's ballot receipt deadline. The emergency ballot (SF-186, Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot, or FWAB) is available on the Internet at <http://www.fvap.gov/pubs/forms.html>.

Registration and ballot request procedures and deadlines vary by state. Information about your state's procedures is available on the Internet at <http://www.fvap.gov/pubs/vag/vagchapter3.html>. Information about your state's registration and voting deadlines is available at <http://www.fvap.gov/pubs/primarycal.html>.

There may be late changes to your state's voting calendar, procedures or deadlines. When these occur, the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) will issue a News Release. News Releases are available on the Internet at <http://www.fvap.gov/pubs/releases.html>.

The official US Government website for overseas absentee voting assistance is the Federal Voting Assistance Program website at www.fvap.gov. It has a wealth of information about absentee voting, including the downloadable absentee ballot application (SF-76, Federal Post Card Application, or FPCA), state-specific instructions for completing the form, links to or contact numbers for state and local officials, and the downloadable emergency ballot.

Overseas Americans may contact Democrats Abroad, Republicans Abroad or other American citizens groups or organizations for absentee voting information, or for assistance in registering to vote or to request absentee ballots. Links to these groups may be found on the FVAP website at <http://www.fvap.gov/links/ocitlinks.html>.

Non-partisan information about candidates, their voting records, and their positions on issues is widely available and easy to obtain via the Internet. You may use the links appearing on the Federal Voting Assistance Program website at <http://www.fvap.gov/links/otherlinks.html>, or you can choose to use one of the many popular search engines to locate articles and information.

Additionally, the Voting Assistance Officer at the U.S. Embassy/Consulate in Tegucigalpa is available to answer questions about absentee voting. To contact the Voting Assistance Officer, call 504-238-5114, Extension 4400 or send an e-mail to usahonduras@state.gov. Look for notices from the Embassy/Consulate throughout the year relating to the 2006 elections.

Again, we strongly encourage you to begin this process as soon as possible. Should questions or problems occur, you would still be able to address them in time to vote in your state's primary and general elections.

Consular Section

Avenida La Paz
Tegucigalpa, Honduras
Phone: (504) 236-9320
or (504) 238-5114
Fax: (504) 238-4357

Website: <http://honduras.usembassy.gov>

American Citizens Services

Phone: (504) 238-5114
ext. 4400
Fax: (504) 238-4357
Email: usahonduras@state.gov

Please register at:
<https://travelregistration.state.gov/>

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

American Citizens Services handles U.S. Passports, reports of birth and death, registrations, and other assistance to U.S. Citizens living in or visiting Honduras. In order to serve you better, please remember to register with us online.

Each issue we will have a Frequently Asked Question section that is beneficial to our citizens. You may submit a question, if you wish, to the American Citizens services address at left.

Q1: Is additional health insurance necessary while traveling abroad or living in Honduras?

A1: Since the Embassy cannot pay for your medical transport back to the U.S., we **strongly** recommend that you buy MEDEVAC insurance while you are here in case of a medical emergency that may require healthcare in the U.S. It has already saved the lives of several American missionaries.

Q2: Why is it necessary to register with the Embassy?

A2: By registering your trip, you help the Embassy or Consulate locate you when you might need them the most. Registration is voluntary and costs nothing, but it should be a big part of your travel planning and security. The Embassy needs an accurate count of U.S. citizens to notify them and provide them with information in the events of natural disasters or emergency situations.

Please see **www.travel.state.gov** for helpful information on Honduras and for travel warnings around the world.

-Contributed by the Consular Section

Some winning photos from the Peace Corps photo contest, and at right, more photos from the Peace Corps Baseball Tournament:



▲ 18 months later confianza

Photo by: Bonnie Tappan, Omoa

Honduran Sunblock ▼

Photo by: Dayna Dawson, San Jeronimo, Comayagua



▲ No Estacionar

Photo by: Gus Granchalek, El Paraiso, El Paraiso

◀ Handshake

Photo by: Colleen Hennessy, El Playon, Concepción Sur, S.B



Have you seen us?

If you have any information on the following missing Americans in Honduras, please call the American Citizens Services Unit of the Consulate at (504) 238-5114 extension 4400. All information will be kept confidential.



EDUARDO BRAGA

DOB: March 20, 1964

Gender: Male

Age now: 42 yrs.

Height: 6'

Weight: 180 - 200 lbs. (approx)

Hair Color: Black

Eye Color: Black

Missing Date: August 3, 2004

Missing City: La Ceiba/ Pico Bonito



JAMES P. MAHER

DOB: December 15, 1944

Gender: Male

Age now: 62 yrs.

Height: 5'11"

Weight: 160 -180 lbs. (approx)

Hair Color: Brown/Gray

Eye Color: Blue

Missing Date: August 3, 2004

Missing City: La Ceiba/ Pico Bonito



STEVEN L. WARNER

AKA Julian Warner

DOB: January 3, 1960

Gender: Male

Age now: 46 yrs.

Height: 6'1"

Weight: 180 - 200 lbs. (approx.)



Hair Color: Auburn

Eye Color: Blue

Missing Date: December 3, 2004

Missing City: Comayaguela



ALAN L. PUTTERMAN

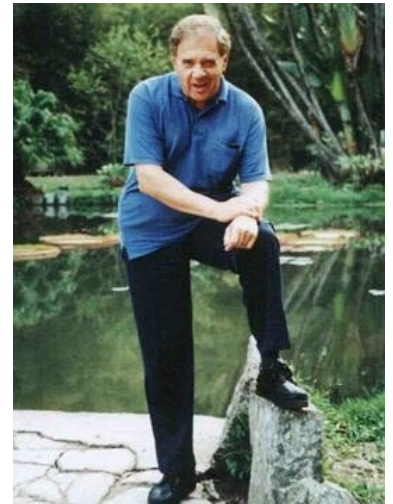
DOB: January 6, 1938

Gender: Male

Age now: 68 yrs.

Height: 6'

Weight: 180 - 200 lbs. (approx)



Hair Color: Grey

Eye Color: Blue

Missing Date: August 27, 2004

Missing City: San Pedro Sula or Tela area